

## ADOPT-A-RIVER AND ADOPT-A-SHORELINE PROGRAMS

Phone: (517) 373-8080  
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House Bills 5155 and 5156 as reported from committee

Sponsor: Rep. Kimberly LaSata

Committee: Tourism and Outdoor Recreation

Complete to 12-11-17

Analysis available at  
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

*(Enacted as Public Acts 78 and 79 of 2018)*

**BRIEF SUMMARY:** House Bills 5155 and 5156 would amend the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to modify, respectively, the Adopt-a-River program (Part 359) and the Adopt-a-Shoreline program (Part 358), and to eliminate certain data collection and reporting requirements under those programs.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The fiscal impact of House Bills 5155 and 5156 on the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is indeterminate. The DNR could realize reduced administrative costs through the elimination of data information sheets and the programs' annual reports. The DNR may also experience increased administrative costs by virtue of the requirement to identify necessary permits or authorizations for volunteer groups to carry out program activities. The extent of these cost increases and decreases would vary with the number of volunteers and groups as well as the scope of program activities. The bills are unlikely to affect costs or revenues for local units of government.

### **THE CONTENT OF THE BILLS:**

Under current law, the DNR is charged with assisting volunteer groups to select ("adopt") a designated segment of a river or a shoreline, respectively, from which the group agrees to remove litter at least once a year for a minimum of 2 years.

House Bill 5155 would amend Part 359 (Adopt-a-River Program), and House Bill 5156 would amend Part 358 (Adopt-a-Shoreline Program), to do the following regarding these programs:

- Specify that the rivers and riverbanks (HB 5155) and shorelines (HB 5156) available for adoption by volunteer groups are those within state parks and state recreation areas, and that a request to adopt a specific segment of river or shoreline is subject to the approval of the park or recreation area manager or supervisor.
- Eliminate a requirement that volunteers must agree to care for their designated segment of river (HB 5155) or shoreline (HB 5156) for any specific length of time.
- Eliminate a requirement that the DNR supply volunteers with "data information sheets" to record and report the types of trash collected during cleanup efforts.
- Repeal a section requiring the DNR to submit an annual report to the legislature on the progress of the program and the types of trash collected by volunteer groups.

- Direct the DNR to identify any necessary permits or other authorizations that the volunteer group may need to obtain before undertaking its activities.
- Specify that the program does not prohibit other cleanup efforts on state land.

Currently, under each program, the DNR is also required to recognize and acknowledge the efforts of participating volunteers, and to provide them with safety information, safety assistance, and natural resource information and educational materials. The bills would retain these requirements for both programs.

Each bill would take effect 90 days after its enactment.

MCL 324.35901, 324.35903, and 324.35904 (HB 5155)

MCL 324.35801, 324.35803, and 324.35804 (HB 5156)

### ***BACKGROUND INFORMATION:***

The Adopt-a-River program was established by Act 88 of 1996 to encourage, facilitate, and direct the efforts of volunteers to beautify and clean litter from rivers and public land along rivers in Michigan. The Adopt-a-Shoreline program was established by Act 89 of 1996 to encourage volunteer cleanup and beautification efforts on state-owned land along the state's shorelines. The programs were modeled after the Adopt-a-Park program established by Act 121 of 1994, which enabled volunteers to assist state park staff in maintaining and improving state parks.

According to committee testimony, administration of the river and shoreline programs got lost in the shuffle when the DNR and the Department of Environmental Quality were combined into a single department, then separated again, between 2009 and 2011. The bills are an attempt to reinvigorate the programs, in part by clearly delineating the role of the DNR in their administration. The stipulation under the bills that the rivers and shorelines to be adopted are those within state parks and recreation areas (i.e., lands the DNR administers) brings these volunteer efforts into potentially beneficial proximity to Friends of the State Parks organizations and volunteer groups currently active under the Adopt-a-Park program.

### ***ARGUMENTS:***

#### ***For:***

For over twenty years Michigan has had laws on the books creating programs to encourage the organized efforts of volunteer workers to clean and beautify its rivers and shorelines. These programs have been underutilized, while similar programs benefiting the state's highways and parks have had success. Proponents of HBs 5155 and 5156 argue that the bills will reinvigorate the adopt-a-river and adopt-a-shoreline programs by bringing them more decisively under the authority and administration of the DNR, by providing greater flexibility for volunteers through elimination of the current 2-year-commitment and data-

reporting requirements, and by a renewed interest in and publicity for these little-known programs generated in part by the bills themselves.

***Neutral:***

The question was raised in committee of whether the DNR would use signage recognizing volunteers similar to that under the Adopt-a-Highway program administered by the Michigan Department of Transportation. It was stated that these bills were drafted without specific concern for such signage, and it was thought that people would not want signs along the rivers or shorelines whose natural beauty is the point of the programs. However, the DNR could consider placing signs in parking lots or at launch sites under its general mandate under the act to recognize the efforts of volunteers in each program.

***Against:***

No arguments opposing the bills were offered.

***POSITIONS:***

Representatives of the Department of Natural Resources testified in support of the bills.  
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Legislative Analyst: Rick Yuille  
Fiscal Analyst: Austin Scott

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House Fiscal Agency staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.